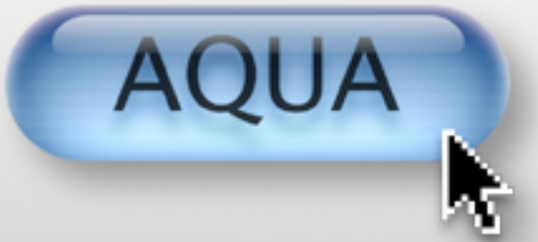
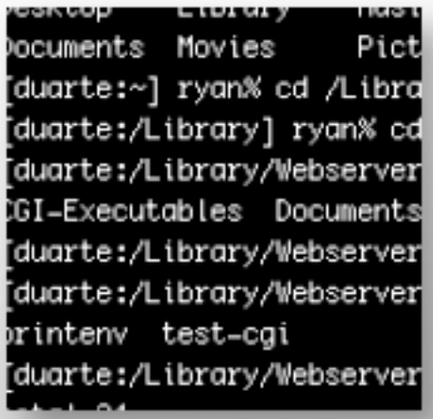
Apple Help

Session 408





Apple Help

Updates and How To’s

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Agenda

- Demo
- You've changed everything!
- Nothing's changed
- Q&A

Demo

You've Changed Everything!

- Help Viewer is now a client of Web Kit
  - Same HTML renderer used in Safari!

- HTML 4.01 (frames, tables, forms, oh my!)
- Cascading Style Sheets (CSS levels 1, 2 and the emerging CSS 3)
- JavaScript 1.4 (ECMAScript 262 edition 3)
- DOM levels 0, 1 and 2
- Some Microsoft DOM extensions (e.g. innerHTML)

Now What Would You Expect to Pay?

- Support for Netscape cookies (the de facto standard)
- Support for the Netscape plugin API
- Java Applets
- Character sets galore
- Bi-directional text and contextual letterforms

- Learn more about the HTML support in Web Kit!

  411 Web Standards, Nob Hill, Wednesday, 10:30am

But Wait, There's More!

- Updated and standardized download policy
  - If there's a net connection:
    - Check server for newer content
  - If nothing newer, or no net connection
    - Check the cache
    - Check local content

You've Changed Everything!

- Faster!
  - Web Kit helped
  - Optimizations and algorithmic improvements

- One note:
  - Launch time reduced by standard naming of index file

Nothing's Changed

- All existing content continues to work (of course)
  - The renderer is different, so review your formatting
  - QuickTime plug-in is now used for movies

- Let's review
  - What is Apple Help?
  - Authoring for Apple Help
  - Optimizing your help content

What Is Apple Help?

- Help Viewer optimized for help delivery
- Full-text, relevancy-ranked searching
- AppleScript-based task automation
- Display of multimedia content
  - QuickTime, Flash built-in
  - Other formats based on plug-in availability
- Mixture of remote and local content files
- System APIs for leading users to help content

Authoring in 4 Steps

1. Develop your content in HTML 4
   - Use your favorite HTML authoring tool
   - Add AppleTitle meta tag to your “home” page

     ```
     <meta name=”AppleTitle” content=”Surfwriter Help”>
     ```

   - AppleTitle provides the name of your book
   - AppleTitle throughout the help system for APIs, etc.

Authoring in 4 Steps

2. Index for searching
   - Use the Apple Help Indexing Tool
     /Developer/Applications/
   - Set the Indexing Tool preferences
     - Remote root for Internet content
     - Tokenizer for language
     - Anchor indexing
   - Drag and drop your folder of HTML
     - Creates index (idx) file in correct location
       - For best performance, don’t rename the index file

Authoring in 4 Steps

3. Your help folder goes in your app's bundle
   Surfwriter.app/Contents/Resources/English.lproj/SurfwriterHelp/

Authoring in 4 Steps

4. Hook up your Help menu (Cocoa)
   - Add two keys to info.plist

     CFBundleHelpBookFolder
     - SurfwriterHelp for example

     CFBundleHelpBookName
     - Surfwriter Help, must match AppleTitle tag in HTML
   - In Interface Builder
     - Change the name of the Help menu item to AppName Help. “Surfwriter Help” for example

Authoring in 4 Steps

4. Hook up your Help menu (Carbon)
   - Add the two keys to info.plist
   - After your Initialize(), call AHRegisterHelpBook

```
AHRegisterHelpBook(&bundleFSRef);
```

   - Details in the Apple Help Tutorial

/Developer/Documentation/Apple Help/Tutorial

Optimize for Searching

- Standard “robots” search engine directives for each page

```
<meta name=”robots” content=”noindex”>
```

  - Others include:
    - Keywords
    - Anchors

Optimize for Searching

- Add keywords to improve results

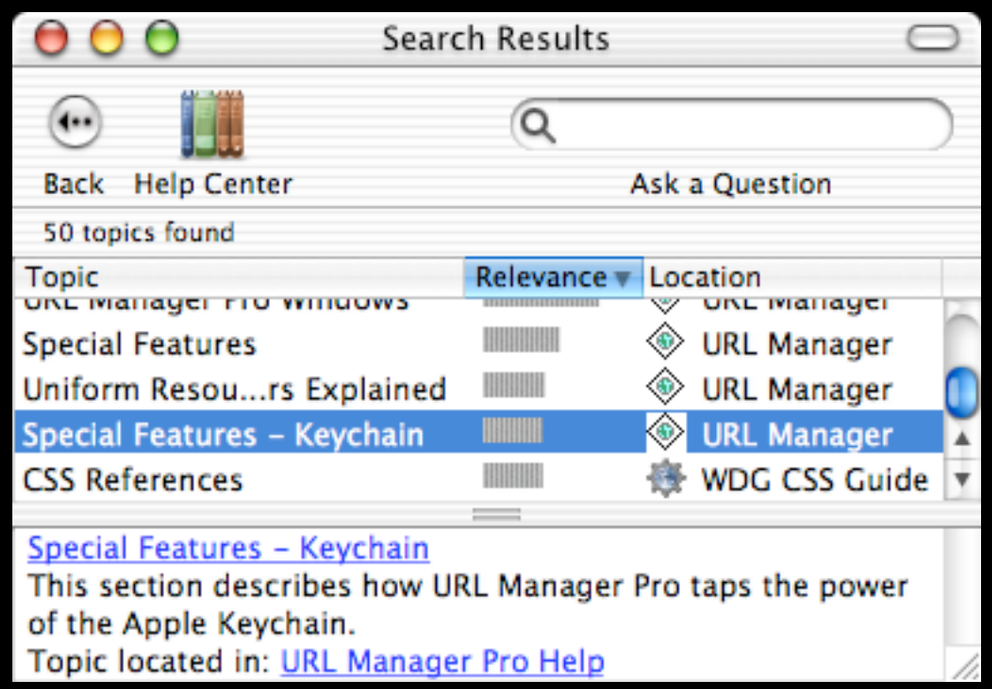
```
<meta name="keywords" content="disc, disk">
```

  - Best used for synonyms, misspellings

Optimize for Searching

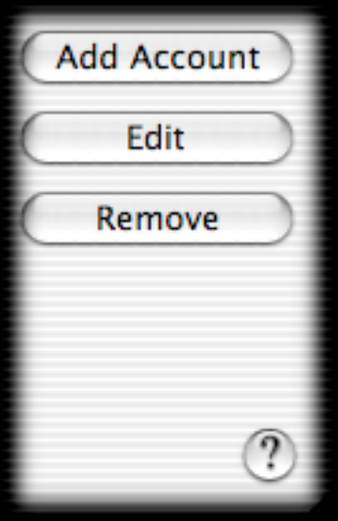
- Provide page summaries

```
<meta name="description" content="You can set up a
stylesheet using the Look and Feel dialog.">
```



Calling Help From an Application

- Call Help Viewer using:
  - Help: URLs in any HTML content
  - AppleScript: `tell application "Help Viewer"`
  - Apple Help C API



- Call Help Viewer to:
  - Perform a search
  - Open a help book
  - Display a specific help page

Calling Help From an Application

- Anchors are the best way to call specific pages

```
<a name="SurfWriterFoo1">
```

- Call AHLookupAnchor
  - Help Viewer finds page containing the anchor
- Authors can move anchors freely without causing a revision in your application

Mixing Remote and Local Content

- Several optimizations in Panther
- Automatically updates search indices
  - You can add pages after you've shipped
- Can prefer internet content
  - If user has a good net connection, remote content is shown and cached
- You tell Help Viewer where to find remote content at indexing time
  - "Remote Root" in Apple Help Indexing Tool

Tips for Remote Content

- Single topic per page
  - Good for searching, good for remote content too
- Set appropriate cache periods
  - Standard meta cache directive
- Be mindful of large graphics
  - If user is connected, Help Viewer will use the remote version of your image files

In Summary

- Panther's Help Viewer
  - Much faster
  - HTML Standards
  - Smarter Internet usage

In Summary

- Why Apple Help?
  - Better user experience
  - Optimized Help features
  - Easy to author and implement

For More Information

Reference Library

Documentation

Apple Help
ADC Home > Technical > User Experience > Help

Who to Contact

Apple Help Engineering Team
applehelpcomments@group.apple.com

Help Authoring Mailing List
http://lists.apple.com/apple-help-authoring/
apple-help-authoring@lists.apple.com

http://developer.apple.com/wwdc2003/urls.html

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Q&A

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WWDC 2003

Worldwide Developers Conference